



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UNEMPLOYMENT RATE INCREASES TO 3.6%

(HELENA) --- The state unemployment rate increased from February 2008 to March 2008 by 0.3%, moving to 3.6%; the national unemployment rate increased by the same amount, going from 4.8% to 5.1%.

"We are starting to see the expected job losses in the wood products and lumber industries from the plant closings and layoffs announced by companies in prior months," says Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly. "However, the impacts of the housing correction and resulting financial liquidity crunch seem limited to the timber industry, as Montana has added jobs in construction, energy, and other industries since the start of the year."

Seasonally adjusted non-farm payroll employment increased by approximately 1,100 jobs. However, the total number of Montanans who are working, including agricultural and self-employed workers, remained almost steady, increasing by only 182 jobs in March. Montana also experienced an increase in the labor force, having 1,607 workers enter the job market.

The seasonally adjusted consumer price index (CPI-U) increased by 0.3 percent between February and March, led by an increase in the energy index of 1.9 percent. Price levels for food at home increased by 0.2 percent. The price levels for all items less food and energy rose 0.2 percent.

Regionally, North Dakota's rate increased by 0.1% to 3.1%, South Dakota's rate decreased by 0.4% to 2.5%, and Wyoming's rate increased by 0.4% to 3.1%.

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**Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.7 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau.*

The April 2008 Labor Situation Report will be released on Friday, May 16, 2008.

******* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *******

Monthly labor force information for Montana counties are available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=205>

Monthly Montana industry employment information is available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=199>

Annual labor force data for Indian Reservations in Montana are available at:

www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/?PAGEID=67&SUBID=121